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Basics. The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

Medium | B1 | Intermediate | Past tense | Verb | Verb tense | Perfect tense | Progressive tense | Simple tense

1. Select the correct verb form to complete the pet owner's funny observation.

When I finally found Buster in the garden, he was covered in mud and looking very guilty. He ___ a massive hole under the rosebushes all morning!

Select one.

- **A)** has been digging
- **B)** is digging
- **C)** had been digging
- **D)** digs

2. Help the detective complete her notes on the clumsy burglar's timeline by selecting the best options.

By the time the security guard finally woke up, the thief _____ to crack the safe for two hours. He was completely exhausted because he _____ from a very angry goose for miles before he even broke into the building!

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** was trying
- **B)** has been trying
- **C)** had been trying

Blank 2

- **A)** was running
- **B)** has been running
- **C)** had been running

3. Help Inspector Clouseau finish his crime scene notes by dragging the correct verb forms into the blanks.

When I entered the kitchen, there was flour everywhere. The suspect _____ cupcakes for hours before the smoke alarm finally _____.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** has been baking
- **B)** was baked
- **C)** had been baking

Blank 2

- **A)** was ringing
- **B)** rang
- **C)** had rung

4. Help Detective Barnaby complete his case notes about the messy kitchen. Choose the correct phrase to complete the sentence.

The kitchen was covered in flour, and the oven was still warm. It was obvious that someone ___ cookies before I arrived.

Select one.

- **A)** has been baking
- **B)** had been baking
- **C)** was baked
- **D)** bakes

5. Complete the music journalist's concert review by matching the correct verbs to the blanks.

When the rock band finally _____ the stage at midnight, the exhausted fans _____ in the pouring rain for over three hours.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** were taking
- **B)** have taken
- **C)** took

Blank 2

- **A)** were cheering
- **B)** have been cheering
- **C)** had been cheering

6. Choose the correct phrase to complete the gamer's text message to her friend.

My eyes were completely red and my thumbs ached. I ___ that new fantasy game for six hours straight when you finally called!

Select one.

- **A)** was playing
- **B)** have been playing
- **C)** had been playing
- **D)** am playing

7. Complete the tired college student's text message to her friend about her library mishap. Drag the right verb phrases to fill the gaps.

I was so embarrassed! I fell asleep right on my keyboard because I _____ my history essay for six hours straight. By the time I finally _____ up, I had drooled all over my notes.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** was typing
- **B)** have been typing
- **C)** had been typing

Blank 2

- **A)** have woken
- **B)** was waking
- **C)** woke

8. Complete the roommate's apologetic text message about the kitchen explosion by choosing the correct verb forms.

I am so sorry! The kitchen was a total disaster zone when you arrived because I _____ to bake a surprise birthday cake for three hours! I looked like a ghost because flour _____ out of the broken electric mixer all afternoon.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** have been trying
- **B)** was trying
- **C)** had been trying

Blank 2

- **A)** has been blowing
- **B)** is blowing
- **C)** had been blowing

9. Help Detective Miller complete his case notes by selecting ALL the sentences that correctly describe the suspect's actions before the arrest.

Select all that apply.

- **A)** He was completely out of breath because he had been running from the police.
- **B)** He has been hiding in the swamp before we found him.
- **C)** His boots were covered in mud because he had been walking through the marsh.
- **D)** He had been run for three miles when we finally caught him.

10. Fill in the captain's log about the mysterious abandoned spaceship you just discovered.

We found the ship drifting in orbit. The engines were completely dead, but the emergency lights _____ for months, according to the ship's computer. Based on the half-eaten space-waffles in the cafeteria, it was obvious that the crew _____ for a sudden evacuation right before they disappeared.

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** were blinking
- **B)** have been blinking
- **C)** had been blinking

Blank 2

- **A)** were preparing
- **B)** has been preparing
- **C)** had been preparing

11. Complete the drummer's interview about their chaotic tour. Choose ALL the options that grammatically fit into the blank to form a correct past perfect continuous sentence.

"By the time the lead singer finally arrived at the venue, the rest of the band _____."

Select all that apply.

- **A)** had been practicing for three hours
- **B)** has been sleeping on the tour bus
- **C)** were been tuning their instruments
- **D)** had been waiting impatiently backstage

12. Read the angry chef's review of last night's dinner service. Select ALL the sentences that correctly use the past perfect continuous tense.

Select all that apply.

- **A)** We had been preparing the vegetables for hours when the power suddenly went out.
- **B)** The soup boiled over because the new cook had been ignoring the stove.
- **C)** I had been worked in this kitchen for ten years before I saw such a mess.
- **D)** The clumsy waiter had been dropping three plates before 8 PM.